



July 22, 2008

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The Honorable John Dingell
Chairman
Energy & Commerce Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Joe Barton
Ranking Member
Energy & Commerce Committee
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Dingell and Ranking Member Barton:

We write in support of the Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute to H.R. 6357, the Protecting Records, Optimizing Treatment, and Easing Communication through Healthcare Technology Act of 2008, which the Committee on Energy and Commerce will mark-up on Wednesday, July 23, 2008.

In our testimony before the Committee's Health Subcommittee on June 4, we testified in support of the initial discussion draft of the legislation. We called on Congress to enact a comprehensive privacy and security framework to cover electronic health information, and we praised the discussion draft as set of workable first steps toward achieving the comprehensive protections that are essential to building consumer trust in e-health systems and facilitating more rapid adoption of electronic health records. We made some suggestions for improvements at that hearing, and we are pleased to see that most of them have been incorporated into the Amendment. We support your efforts to move this Amendment forward without delay.

We are grateful to you and your staff members for making privacy and security a priority in health IT and for your extraordinary efforts in preserving these important provisions while trying to address the concerns raised by health care stakeholders. We look forward to continuing to work with you to strengthen privacy and security protections for personal health information in 2008 and beyond.

Sincerely,

/s/Leslie Harris

Leslie Harris
President/CEO

/s/Deven McGraw

Deven McGraw
Director, Health Privacy Project